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Ex 892
"THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 4-H CLUB ACHIEVEMENTS."

A radio talk by Thomas P. Cooper, Director of Extension Service, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, delivered in the 4-H Club Achievement Day Radio Program, over a network of 48 associate stations, Saturday, November 3, 1934.

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Greetings and congratulations to the many thousand 4-H club girls and boys who have gathered throughout the Nation to review and celebrate the achievements of the year. The opportunity of addressing such an enthusiastic and vibrant audience is a particularly appealing privilege.

It seems most fitting that we should each year take cognizance of the achievements, and pay tribute to the heartening and admirable accomplishments of the young men and women who form the membership of 4-H clubs.

Kentucky takes prideful interest in this annual observance, for the idea of a 4-H club national achievement day was the enlargement of a plan submitted in the spring of 1930 to Dr. Smith by Mr. T. R. Bryant, Assistant Director of Agricultural Extension, University of Kentucky. In the fall of that year, the first national achievement day was observed.

Frequently, during the past four years, I have attended county achievement day exercises. Each event has been an inspiration and has strengthened my belief that 4-H clubs exert a tremendous influence in our rural life and in the problems which belong peculiarly to the farm and home. By the magic of education and leadership, the ordinary and often thought commonplace work and affairs of the farm and of the home are made so attractive to young boys and girls as to capture their interest and challenge their best endeavor.

Leadership, economic returns, social advantages and education are the tangible and intangible values of 4-H clubs. It is these significant features of 4-H clubs which have so won the approval of educators, leaders of industry and finance, of congress and State legislatures.

The Colleges of Agriculture and the United States Department of Agriculture have given 4-H club work a national aspect and a practical idealism. Their creative leadership has directed the application of science to the varied activities of the farm and home. They have furnished the vital, aggressive force that has lifted these activities from what has appeared menial to the realm of artistry. With this vision and impetus, a great group of community leaders, estimated at more than sixty thousand, have given freely of their time and of their ability to club activities. To these farm men and women a very large measure of the success of the club movement is due.

To realize the progress that the young people have made in the first steps of leadership, one has but to witness a demonstration by a well-trained team, the showing of a champion in the ring, or to note how they conduct themselves in the severe test of competitive endeavor.

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Thus in leadership, there is a twofold accomplishment - that of training adults as 4-H club community leaders and the training for leadership which the club members receive. Leadership is a form of education, the results of which become visible in the progress of economic endeavor, social relations and in citizenship. The personal element is that indefinable quality of personality, confidence and the evidence of time well spent in the betterment of life.

The economic returns from 4-H clubs are large. Last year, almost a million boys and girls participated in club activities. Their projects covered every enterprise common to farm and home life, such as production of crops and livestock, beautification of home grounds, clothing, health, foods, and home management. The monetary returns, even though usually sufficient to more than repay the boy or girl for the time expended in the project are not to be compared with the oftentimes momentous returns to the community.

As the result of 4-H club demonstrations that corn could be produced successfully in a State where the adults had regarded it as unimportant, I have seen the crop become one of major importance and the whole attitude of the community change. Feeding practices with cattle, hogs, and dairy cattle in very considerable areas have changed with the knowledge gained from 4-H clubs. In the home, the tangible results of 4-H club work are evidenced in the improvement of furnishings and clothing, the preparation and preservation of foods, and in a sane and sensible hygiene of mind and body.

Membership in 4-H clubs offers opportunity for acquaintance with other boys and girls of the community and for the forming of desirable friendships. State and national achievement enlarges this opportunity and provides travel, the meeting of men and women of State and national influence, an acquaintance with boys and girls from other counties and other States, an understanding and appreciation of club members and club work outside one's local community, and the advantages of the social and cultural associations from trips to the State University, the State Fair, the National 4-H Camp, and the National 4-H Club Congress. The home as a social group and all extra-home activities are emphasized as sources of cultural influence. There is instilled the idea that art in its broadest sense enters into every phase of life, whether it be the straight furrow plowed across a brown field, or the perfect turning of a hem; whether it be man's attitude toward man or a woman's greeting from her doorstep.

The whole idea of education is embodied in the 4-H club program. 4-H clubs meet not only the immediate need of applying information and imagination to the enterprises of farm and home to bring about needed improvements, but point the way to educational advantages within the grasp of every farm boy and girl. Club members are impressed with the value of education and with the importance of applying exact information to everyday affairs if life is to be successful and fully lived. It is not a matter of chance then that we find increasing numbers of 4-H club members seeking higher education. A study made in the North Central States for a period of five years shows that from 18 to 28 percent of

the college enrollment in agriculture and home economics is made up of students who were engaged in club work. Approximately 10 percent of the students of our own University are former 4-H club members. Reports from other institutions show a similar proportionate enrollment of 4-H club members. I am convinced that this aroused desire for education is one of the outstanding merits of the 4-H clubs.

These, in brief, are the real and significant achievements of 4-H clubs which have all but revolutionized the attitude and practice in community farm and home. Leadership is developed, ambition is fired, the desire for education is aroused. A dignity is added to the affairs of rural life. Emphasis is given to the desirability of participation in community life and the ability to work and to cooperate with others. I leave to your imagination the inward satisfaction of 4-H club members when they look back upon the past and then turn to the life ahead of them. Surely, much may be expected from the high hopes and steadfast purpose of our country youth. Only the ultimate in ideals and concepts should be the criteria for our 4-H clubs.

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